

Aeroflot Subsidiary Dobrolyot to Start Budget Flights in July

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Russia's new low-cost airline Dobrolyot.

Dobrolyot, Russia's new low-cost airline and a subsidiary of flag carrier Aeroflot, is expected to obtain all the permits and aircraft necessary to start charter flight operations in July this year, Vedomosti reported Wednesday. The company plans its first flights to St. Petersburg, Samara, Krasnodar and Yekaterinburg.

Officials at the Federal Air Transportation Agency, or Rosaviation, at a meeting on Tuesday recommended that Dobrolyot obtain a license to perform charter flights, as by law for such flights the company would need only three aircraft, while for regular flights it would have to obtain at least eight.

The company is not technically an airline as it does not have any planes yet. One Boeing 737-800 will be delivered by the end of April and another by the end of May, while a third is expected in August, a Dobrolyot source said.

But the parent company may lend a hand. One of its subsidiaries, most likely Orenburg Airlines, may lease Dobrolyot the third plane. Aeroflot's board will examine this issue at a meeting scheduled for April 21.

Leasing six aircraft to the low-cost carrier for it to obtain a license for regular flights may prove to be more costly and require an additional \$40 million.

The low-cost carrier has also to choose a base airport. Sheremetyevo Airport has no space to host Dobrolyot as it plans to demolish its B Terminal, formerly Sheremetyevo 1, by the end of 2014 and build a new one. The terminal was formerly used by Dobrolyot's predecessor Avianova. The Domodedovo and Vnukovo airports will not sign an agreement with Dobrolyot before it is granted an operator's certificate.

A Rosaviation official said that the process of obtaining this certificate may take about a month. So if Dobrolyot gets three planes by the end of May, it will obtain the certificate no earlier than by the end of June. To obtain the charter license will take between 14 and 45 days. Therefore operations may start in the beginning of July, although Dobrolyot hopes to obtain all the necessary permits earlier and start flights already in June.

Dobrolyot, which plans to increase its fleet to eight aircraft by the end of November, may then obtain the license to perform regular flights.

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